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## *This Canada of Ours*

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To Canada our fathers came  
And gave this unknown land its name  
This Canada of ours;  
God grant that we will never let  
That name be tarnished or forget  
The joy of building mightier yet  
This Canada of ours.

The eager rivalry and strife  
Of older nations brought to life  
This Canada of ours;  
They fought for what they thought was good;  
God, in His Mercy, understood  
And formed into a brotherhood  
This Canada of ours.

In strength together we will stand,  
Defending our beloved land,  
This Canada of ours;  
And never shall it cease to be  
A nation where all men are free  
In harmony from sea to sea  
This Canada of ours.

With joy we welcome those who come,  
In loyalty, to make their home  
This Canada of ours  
To them we give our rights to share,  
From them we ask, always to bear  
In love, in honour, and in prayer  
This Canada of ours.

*Percy J. Philip*

The words of the anthem "This Canada of Ours" were composed by Mr. Percy J. Philip, O.B.E., Press Gallery representative of the New York Times. The anthem was set to music by Mr. Robert Donnell, Dominion Carillonneur, and by arrangement with Messrs. Philip and Donnell, the first public rendition of the anthem was reserved for the National Citizenship Ceremony in Ottawa, January 3rd, 1947.

# The Icelandic Canadian

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No. 3

## *Spanning the Atlantic*

The Icelandic Canadian has three main purposes to fulfil. One may put it slightly differently and say that it has three objectives which it desires to reach. It seeks to interpret the position people of Icelandic extraction in North America should take to Canada and the United States which now are their mother countries by birth or adoption, and record the achievements of those who have made special contributions to the building of these two nations; it provides a means whereby we can keep in contact with one another as we scatter over the vast expanse of a continent and become more and more absorbed in the life of these two nations; it hopes to be able to give ever increasing assistance in preserving the cultural bonds, and those of sentiment, with the people of the island from which our fathers and mothers came.

The third of these objectives is mentioned last, not because it is the least important—far from it—but because it is the subject of this editorial comment. Speaking on behalf of the editorial board, and not using the editorial “we”, it must be admitted at the outset that so far we have accomplished little in this third field of our effort, but we hasten to add that it is not because it has escaped our thoughts. It was felt that, first of all, the magazine, in which English is the medium of expression, had to become reasonably well established as a cultural instrument seeking to serve an ethnic group in America. We also had to make known, not only in the official statement of our policy, as set out in the second issue of the magazine, but also in the actual editorials and articles themselves and in the pattern of news

reported and information supplied, what we sought to accomplish. In our actions, as revealed in the written word, we have tried to establish that the course we took was sound, that to a large extent it was dictated by the stern realities, as we found them, and that it was directed along such channels as would best serve the threefold purpose we had in mind.

Sufficient time has now elapsed and enough written material presented to enable the reader to judge for himself whether we are succeeding in the first two fields of our endeavor. What that judgment is we leave to the readers themselves. We feel, however, that it will be reasonably favorable and that the magazine is now sufficiently well established to warrant an approach to the third, and in a way the most difficult branch of our programme. An attempt to reach the people of Iceland through a magazine written wholly in a foreign tongue, on a subject which is very close and real to them—the cultural bond between them and ourselves—may appear to border on presumption on our part. If we are misunderstood by our cousins in Iceland and those here who are fighting a valiant yet losing battle in trying to preserve that bond by maintaining purely Icelandic institutions here, we plead our sincerity and our knowledge of the facts as revealed in our daily contacts with people of Icelandic descent in Canada and the United States. We feel that the time has come when the people of Iceland must know and understand us as American and Canadian citizens, and we must understand them as the people of our forebears who are preserving in their island home a language and a literature which

we value very highly, a culture which has produced traits which are so deeply ingrained in us as to be and remain a part of ourselves, even though outward forms of expression may wither and eventually disappear.

Having this in mind the writer ventured to broach this subject to a man in Iceland who lived in Canada for a number of years and hence was qualified in a very special way to interpret to the people of Iceland what we had in mind and to explore possible avenues of approach. In the letter written to him, two suggestions were made. The first was that there should be an exchange of articles: people in Iceland, preferably young people, would write articles, either in Icelandic or English, which would be sent to us and published in English in our magazine; articles would be written here, again preferably by young people, some of whom would be people of Icelandic extraction who didn't understand a word of Icelandic, such articles to appear in Icelandic in selected newspapers or periodicals in Iceland. The second suggestion was that groups of young people from America, interested by blood or through marriage, should visit Iceland and vice versa. The writer thought at the time and still thinks that if these group visits were prearranged on both sides the unfavorable exchange situation might to some extent be overcome if costs of maintenance and travel in the respective countries were at least partially borne by the people visited.

In the letter, which was written to Rev. Friðrik Hallgrímsson, it was intimated that he should write the first article from Iceland.

His reaction to the proposals can best be stated by publishing extracts, translated into English, from his reply.

Kjartansgötu 4, Reykjavík,  
7 February, 1947

Dear Judge W. J. Lindal  
Winnipeg

Sincere thanks for your letter of Oct. 7 and the enclosed papers. I enjoyed

reading your article (Education in Iceland) and am convinced that it served a useful purpose. I should have written you before and I have often thought of what you mentioned in your letter.

Now I am enclosing the article which you asked me to write, which I purposely did not make any longer because people prefer to read short articles. You can give it whatever title you deem fitting. . .

If you decide to couple with the article some words from yourself you might mention that I lived in Canada almost 22 years and am now a member of the branch in Iceland of the National League. You could at the same time refer to your suggestion that there be an exchange of newspaper articles. I have discussed this with some men here and have hopes that I shall soon be able to send you two or three articles which you could publish. I also could arrange to have articles from you appear in newspapers and periodicals here. I again emphasize that they be not long.

In reference to the last item in my article you might mention your idea that young people from your country visit us—something which I think is excellent. People here certainly would take notice if promising and representative groups came, and they would be well received.

I am pleased how keenly interested you are in this matter and I am sure that good will result. . . .

Yours sincerely,

F. Hallgrímsson

Thoughts similar to those of Rev. Hallgrímsson have been expressed by others. Representatives of Iceland in America and visitors from Iceland have been asked for their opinions and all have viewed the proposals for an exchange of articles and group visits very favorably. A short time ago a letter was received by our Circulation Manager, Hjálmur F. Danielson from Thorsteinn Einarson, the athletic representative in the office of the Director of Education in Iceland. In part, it reads as follows:



"Last spring I was in Winnipeg for three days. I stayed with Icelanders and got slightly acquainted with the Icelanders in the West (Vestur-Íslendinga).

I had already some knowledge of their efforts to maintain the ties with Iceland and follow events here. I became aware of a fear that the young people of Icelandic extraction would not keep in touch with affairs in Iceland and the bonds would soon be broken and that in order to prevent this a society had been formed in Canada for the younger people of Icelandic descent. This society is your club, called "The Icelandic Canadian Club."

I am taking the liberty, in further pursuance of this subject, to direct to you a few questions which have occurred to me.

Could not the young people's societies here at home and the Icelandic young people's organizations in Canada co-operate in getting better acquainted with each other? Could we not exchange newspapers, arrange for an exchange of letters between young people on both sides of the ocean? Could we not visit one another . . . exchange students?

Undoubtedly some of this could be done if we got to know each other. The young people's societies and athletic clubs . . . would be very glad to give assistance and I am willing to be a middleman. . . .

In the sincere hope that a close co-operation will result, I bid you adieu.

Respectfully,

Þorsteinn Einarson

Rev. Hallgrímsson's article appears in this issue and has been given the title: The Outstretched Hand. There can be no doubt that the young people here will seek to clasp it. This will in no way interfere with but will merely supplement what is already taking place among the older people who prefer the Icelandic language as the medium of exchange of thoughts and sentiments. The ocean is to be spanned for all.

Thorsteinn Einarsson is little known here but Rev. Hallgrímsson will be remembered by many who knew him when he was in Canada and heard him both in and out of the pulpit. He was the Lutheran minister in the Argyle district for over twenty years and at times preached in the First Lutheran Church in Winnipeg. He left Canada to accept a call in the leading church in Reykjavík—dómkirkjunni—and retired a short time ago. He has a charming personality and endeared himself to all who made his acquaintance.

We, of the west, are most fortunate that men such as Rev. Hallgrímsson and Thorsteinn Einarsson are willing to take the lead in Iceland in arranging for constructive discussions, and, if possible, group visits and exchange of students. If this can be accomplished, even though only to a partial extent, it will lead to a better acquaintance and clearer understanding, both of which are so essential if the cultural bonds are to be maintained.

W. J. Lindal

## *The Icelandic Canadian*

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## *Canadian Citizenship*

The passage of the Citizenship Act deserves more than a passing mention, since it is one of the last important milestones in the progress of Canada from the humble status of a colonial outpost to that of a nation wielding some influence in world affairs.

The time is, therefore, opportune to indulge in some genuine soul-searching regarding our fortunate position as Canadian citizens; to meditate upon our country's short but splendid past; to seek a solution for our numerous and perplexing domestic problems; and to consider the means whereby the foundations of this potentially great nation may be built on a sufficiently sound basis to enable it to play its part effectively and constructively upon the international stage.

Canada's stirring past is a challenge and an inspiration. One thinks of the questing prow of intrepid Leifur Eirikson sailing over trackless seas towards the sunset; the splendid patriotic fervor of Champlain; the romance of the fur-traders' adventurous exploits in the vast, lone western land; the courage, industry and perseverance of the settlers hewing homes from the virgin forest; the buoyant optimism of the era of settlement in the West; the slow evolution of our Christian, democratic institutions; and finally the gradual synthesis of many divergent customs, ideals, and traditions into a semblance of homogeneity. Ours is a saga of seemingly insurmountable obstacles encountered and overcome by the unconquerable fortitude of the human spirit.

The oath of the Ephebes, taken by Athenian citizens on their entrance upon civic manhood emphasizes the following virtues: patriotism, obedience to the law, reverence towards the religion of the country, and a progressive attitude embodied in the following quotation, "I will transmit my fatherland, not only

not less, but greater and better than it was transmitted to me". The magnitude of the contribution made by this small nation to the cause of human progress indicates that these ideals were deeply ingrained in the character of its people.

Canadian of yesteryear have transmitted to us an undertaking nobly begun. We are the inheritors of the cultures of many races. It is our task to blend the best features of these into a composite Canadianism, and to prove worthy of our predecessors our first duty must be to put our own house in order.

Racial prejudice and discrimination, the spawn of the tribal system and ultra-nationalism, spasmodically rear their ugly heads amongst us. Religious intolerance—and even persecution—is not entirely a thing of the past in our land. They have no place in the Canada of today and tomorrow. In the field of economics we do not always think nationally. Selfish sectional interests give little thought to the welfare of the country as a whole. We cannot build national unity on a state of mind such as this. Finally, we are being subjected to the propaganda of alien ideologies, that are the very negation of the principles for which we stand. From them, if we are on our guard, we have little to fear, since the foundations of our way of life are too solidly imbedded in our very being.

We are as yet a numerically small nation, but our country and our resources are vast. In less fortunate lands of our "One World", millions are living at a sub-subsistence level without much hope of any amelioration of their lot during their lifetime or that of their children. Our adherence to the tenets of Christianity is mere lip service, unless we admit as many of these victims of fate as we can assimilate. In so doing we shall be rendering a service to ourselves as well as to them, for we need a

larger population to round out our economy.

But our Canadianism cannot and must not be modelled upon the nationalistic imperialism prevalent in the past that obviously had for its motto, "Every nation for itself and the devil take the hindmost". Our patriotism must transcend national boundaries. To be good Canadian we must be good World Citizens. Upon the development of that concept throughout the world depends the welfare, and, perhaps, the very existence of the human race.

Humanity is now at the cross-roads. The wrong turn may lead to the abyss from which the way back will be long and toilsome, if not impossible. Along that way the grim, stark drama of human misery, intensified a thousand-fold, will be re-enacted. Given the right leadership, mankind will choose the road upwards to the sun-drenched

heights of global co-operation and continued human progress. The world of to-day is in dire need of leadership of the right kind.

Canada can provide that type of leadership. Her diverse inheritance from out a storied and inspiring past, the character of her people that has made possible a prosperous present, and the vast resources awaiting development in a promising future all combine to enable her to build a national culture nobler in vision, wider in scope, and more effective in performance than the world has hitherto considered possible. It may be that on this northern half of the North American continent will shine a light which will guide mankind for generations to come.

It is a privilege and an opportunity to be a Canadian.

Axel Vopnfjord

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## Pen and Ink

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It is so wonderful I think  
When friends are made by pen and ink.  
A piece of paper blue or white  
Some one decides that he or she will write  
To some one they have never seen  
Who lives where they have never been.  
A pen becomes a magic wand,  
Two strangers start to correspond.  
How pleasant the exchange of views  
Or comments on latest book reviews.  
Oh, one can talk of this and that  
And have the most interesting chat;  
Two souls who live quite far apart  
Can gladden much each others heart,  
Can nourish much each others mind  
With letters sensible and kind.  
Its really wonderful, I think,  
When friends can be made by pen and ink.

Author unknown. Contributed by Mrs. Nina Halperin.

## *Recollections From Pioneer Days in Winnipeg*

By MARGARET STEPHENSEN

"Love thou thy land, with love far-brought  
From out the Storied Past and used  
Within the Present, but transfused  
Thro' future time by power of thought."

This verse of Tennyson's unconsciously reminds one of the love that the pioneers brought with them from their storied past, and laid at the feet of this new land to which they had come.

The coming to this land was a harsh experience for our people; the country was rough and brutal, and the vastness of it appalled them then as it does now the British who come here and cross the continent. None of the Icelanders had any experience to fall back on, not even in felling trees, when they pioneered in New Iceland. They arrived in the late summer and had to provide shelter for their families before winter set in. That first winter sickness and scurvy were rampant and the ravages of the small-pox epidemic left its mark on nearly every home; there was little medical attention other than the homely knowledge they brought with them. Yet, they survived, these descendants of Vikings.

Being law-abiding people they established regulations to live by, organized their districts and, being a literary people, they also planned the publication of a paper, the first number of which appeared in 1877. We may well stand amazed and awed at the courage and initiative shown by the pioneers of '75 and '76.

The women were no less courageous and in those days everybody 'shared'. 'The milk of human kindness' is an oft used phrase, but at that time it was a reality. The stark devastation of the small-pox epidemic brought forth in fullest measure, the homely virtues. The women helped one another in time of stress, even to the extent of bringing

each others children into the world. My mother ushered Dr. Jack Snidal into this vale of tears, and one of my earliest recollections is of Jack and his father visiting at our home in Winnipeg on Sunday and drinking coffee, after which Mr. Snidal brought out his fiddle and we had music — Icelandic music.

When my family came to Canada in '76 they settled in the Viðirnes district, near where now is Husavick. Their farm was close to Boundary Creek (so called because the little creek was the southern boundary of the land grant received by the settlers from the government), hence was called "við lækinn", though officially the name of the farmstead was Fensal. When my people first settled there they built a log cabin which they shared with a relative, Bergthora, wife of Ásmundur Thorsteinsson, parents of Mrs. J. Hannesson, Sherbrook St. In this log cabin, by the creek which still trickles along its pathway, I was born.

But my father was a carpenter, not a farmer, and in 1882, my parents decided to come to Winnipeg. Education was the lode-stone which drew many at that time to the young city at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers — education for some, and for others, work. The journey was strenuous, everybody walked the fifty miles to Winnipeg, with a conveyance of some kind for the worldly goods and the small children. Very primitive, but the future beckoned and Winnipeg was a golden promise. This was July, 1882.

★

Labor has come a long way since those days, when a carpenter, who was a cabinet maker in the old country, received 10—12½ cents an hour for his labor and skill. Yes, wages were low, but living costs were approximate, resulting in a low living standard for the artisan.

There was, at that time, a good deal of



unrest among the Indians and half-breeds, who, led by Louis Riel, were prepared to fight for their grievances. There was also a good deal of drunkenness among the Indians, and it was a not uncommon sight, these summer days of '82, to see drunken breeds staggering along and shaking their fists at the whites. I remember that we children had strict orders to stay within our own yard. A number of Icelanders joined the colors and wore the uniform of the 90th Winnipeg Regiment, whom the Metis called the "Little Black Devils". The rebellion lasted for three years culminating in the Battle of Batoche in '85, when Riel was defeated and order was restored.

A scattered colony of Icelanders was already established in Winnipeg but there was at that time no pastor, Rev. Jón Bjarnason having gone to Iceland. But even then Christian women were about their Master's business and, coming to the home of the newcomer, they offered Sunday school for the children. It proved to be First Baptist church, then in its original home on Rupert Ave., which we attended for the summer. However, when my mother found that Wesley Methodist Church was closer, we were sent there until Rev. Bjarnason came back in 1884. After that, services were held regularly in the Félagshús, and séra Jón, as he was always called, became the spiritual leader of the Icelandic people in Winnipeg. His qualities of mind and heart are so well known that there is no need for me to stress them. Both he and his wife, frú Lára, possessed leadership qualities and their influence was definitely felt among the little colony.

During these years of Rev. Bjarnason's absence in Iceland, and while he was pastor in New Iceland, a Sunday school was conducted at Point Douglas, where a goodly number took residence, as many of them worked for Brown & Ruthenford's mill. Through the years, there have always been Icelanders in the Point Douglas section of the city, and probably there still are some.

But mainly, all social and religious life centred in the Félagshús on Jemima St., now Elgin Ave., just west of Isabel. That summer of 1882 a school was held there by Magnus Paulson, and my brother, who was eleven, learned enough in three months to carry him into the third grade, or standard 3 as it was then called. Thomas H. Johnson, later Attorney-General for Manitoba, was also a pupil.

Another of the centres of social activity, if I may call them that, in the early eighties, were the boarding houses. I shall mention only two: one kept by "Jón húsbóndi" as he was called, and Eyjólfur Olson's on Young St. The Olson's had been our next door neighbors in New Iceland and a warm friendship existed between the families. I can still recall the pleasure and anticipation of a visit to Olson's to spend the day, and the friendships formed then, still endure. There was little formality, the host and hostess were plain Eyjólfur and Signý, and I remember stopping beside Signý's sewing machine—she was always sewing—while she made kindly inquiries about my parents and family. The kindness and helpfulness of their home were known to all their countrymen.

The women may not have had a vote in those days, but they could hold their own when it came to organizing and calling meetings. The first "Kvenfélag" or Women's Society was organized in 1881 and continued to function for about five years, when it split up on a difference of opinion. Out of one portion came the nucleus of the First Lutheran Ladies Aid, headed by frú Lára Bjarnason and organized in 1886.

During the interval between '82 and '87, when we moved into our own church on Nena St.,—renamed Sherbrook—all activities went forward at the "Félagshús". Icelanders are fundamentally gregarious and socially inclined. Therefore it was imperative that they have their churches, for they have an inborn reverence for spiritual values; their Sunday schools, where their children would receive religious instruction; their meet-

ings, for they loved to get together and thresh things out; and—their paper, their own paper in their own language, and that too, soon became a reality. They had vision, these early pioneers!

The first paper, *Framfari*, (note the name meaning progress) had been started in 1877 in New Iceland and was published at Lundi, close to Icelandic River, now Riverton. The output seems to have been a bit erratic, but 75 copies altogether were published between the fall of 1877 and the spring of 1880. The paper was edited part of the time by Capt. Sigtryggur Jónasson and the remainder by Rev. Halldór Briem. *Framfari* was the first Icelandic paper to be published in this hemisphere.

In May, 1883, another attempt was made to establish an Icelandic paper. This was named "Leifur", (honoring the discoverer of America) and the editor was Helgi Jónsson, a quiet, literary person, who, as I remember him, looked like the old-fashioned type of Englishman. He and his wife, Ingibjörg, were often guests at my home, and I remember her as a beautiful, stately blonde. Somehow, I always associated her with Friðþjófs Ingibjörg, as described in the poem by Tegnér. *Leifur* lasted for three years, when it ceased publication for lack of monetary support. But high praise is due these early pioneers for their struggle.

Now we have the two language papers, *Heimskringla* and *Lögberg*. *Heimskringla* (The Globe) celebrated her jubilee this year; *Lögberg* will do so next year, I believe. It is hard to estimate the value or worth of these papers to a folk who had been brought up in another hemisphere, and who were building a way of life in a new land. But there is no doubt that racial heritages are preserved always first and foremost in the language of origin; the further preservation of that heritage may later be continued in the tongue of the land we live in. We all owe these papers a heavy debt, and we should not forget that the individuality of a people

is expressed through these racial heritages. Ours are those of a free people.

How well I remember the first *Island-ingadagur*, held in 1889 in Victoria Park on the bank of the Red River. Everybody was there and there were speeches and toasts and reading of poetry and refreshments—liquid and otherwise—but mainly coffee. Now fifty-seven celebrations have come and gone. The memories of the old homeland and those of Canada have become so intertwined in our hearts that they now seem one.

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One of my earliest recollections is of a concert which was held in the *Félags-hús*. Frú Lára Bjarnason, who was always a musical leader, had gathered together a group of small girls and taught them several songs. One of these songs was "Tárið" by Kristján Jónsson, uncle of our late pastor, Dr. B. B. Jónsson. I still remember the dress my mother made me for this concert, but I don't think it would look much to a child of 1946.

There was hustle and bustle among the Icelandic colony when a group of immigrants were expected. Much baking and preparing of food to take down to the Immigration Sheds, as they were called in those days. Many had relatives whom they, as a matter of course, took home with them. "Frændsemi" we called it, and it was expressed in kindness and hospitality. No matter that the house you occupied was a tight fit for your own family—there were always ways of making room.

My parents, who had a four-room house for a family of five, took in a family of nine and cared for them until they homesteaded in the Lake Manitoba district. They were related and that was enough. This is just one instance, but it could be multiplied many times over by those who remember that time.

Many old recollections are associated with songs, Icelandic songs: "Ísland far-sældar Frón", reflecting the glaciers and ice-bound shores of the beloved home-

land. Here they could only sing the songs and thus express their nostalgia. "Íslands er það lág", with its lilting waterfalls and swift-rushing rivers. Even after all these years, that song can bring tears to my eyes, who have never seen the homeland. "Þú bláfjalla geimur með heiðjökla hring" was my father's favorite, and these and many others I learned to sing in those early years. For they were part of the heritage that our parents brought with them to this land of promise, Canada.

One of the social activities of these days was the dramatic society, the "Leikfélag", which presented Icelandic versions of various plays. The earliest effort, I think, was "Skuggasveinn", by Matthías Jochumsson, a sombre play dealing with outlaws. Later we had "Æfintýri á gönguför", a much more attractive play and a prime favorite with the public. Of the succession of amateur players who took the part of the students on a walking tour, the only one, to my knowledge, still with us is J. J. Bildfell—at that time quite a glamorous student. And nobody, I am sure, who ever heard it, can forget the poignant air, set to a Czech folk song, that was sung by the poor thief, Hans: "Eg vil fá mér kærustu sem allra, allra fyrst."

Later, of course, we had Fjalla Eyvindur by Jóhann Sigurjónsson, which also had outlaws for its theme, but definitely outclassed Skuggasveinn. The last time Guðrún Indriðadóttir was here, she gave a very fine performance of Halla, the heroine of Fjalla Eyvindur—as did another visiting Icelandic actress later.

There was good music and drama in those early days, presented by visiting artists, such as Bernhardt, who came here around the turn of the century and played "Camille", in French, of course, for which we paid three dollars a seat. Richard Mansfield was much more satisfactory in Shakespearian plays. We often attended Scandinavian concerts which were always enjoyable because the Scandinavians excel in choral singing.

But my outstanding memory of the late nineties in the realm of music was a concert with Johanna Gadske, a Metropolitan singer, David Bispham also of the "Met" and Walter Damrosch as impresario—an unforgettable memory.

★

I cannot speak of pioneers without thinking of one who pioneered here in Winnipeg among his countrymen in the field of medicine. In the early days, roughly speaking, the decade from 1880 to 1890, the favorite physician of the Icelanders was Dr. H. H. Chown, and the interpreter, for you had to have one in those days, was Mrs. J. Julius. She helped many an Icelander to obtain medical aid.

But the first graduate Icelandic physician in Winnipeg was my husband, Dr. O. Stephensen. He came here in 1893 and worked among his countrymen, mostly under primitive conditions. The General Hospital at that time was a small building out on the prairie, (J Flat) and people did not go to a hospital except in extreme cases. He did not often discuss cases—few doctors do—but this incident was unique. The patient, an obstetrical case, was the Icelandic wife of a Mexican half-breed, and her attendant a woman of about eighty. She was starting to bathe the baby on her knees and the doctor was so afraid that she would drop it, that he took the child and finished the job himself. Three years later Dr. Bjornson graduated and later Dr. Brandson came to Winnipeg to practice medicine, so the Icelanders were, from then on, medically speaking—well taken care of.

How many of you remember the old landmarks of those days: the Félagshús, the terrace on Kate St., we called the "Green terrace", the old double house on Jemima St., where lived Rev. J. Bjarnason and Gisli Goodman, organist and tinsmith; Syndicate St., Point Douglas, where most of the Icelanders of that district lived; Northwest Hall—probably the first building of its kind owned by an

Icelander—where the New Years Ball was held annually as well as nearly all other social affairs and Good Templar meetings; Stefan Johnson's store on Ross Ave., across the way, H. S. Bardal's little store on Elgin Ave., where all the Icelanders congregated; the old church on Pacific Ave., often called "Grána", because it was painted grey, and Unity Hall, opposite, where many concerts were held.

That word "opposite" is typical of the Icelanders average reaction. They have ever been thinkers—even those who lacked education never lacked knowledge. They formed their own opinions, and, both on religious matters as well as politics, we have diversified opinion. This attribute, call it what you will, self-reliance, or independence or just **plain faith**, has left a definite mark on the places where Icelanders have settled.

The various settlements, these "blómlegu bygðir" as we often call them, have been a credit to the pioneers, who wrested a living from the soil, became wealthy and passed on to their children the opportunity to carve out careers for themselves. This may seem fulsome praise, but I know our hearts are full of gratitude to these pioneers. They came to this country with empty hands, most of them, and, while giving of their best to this land of their adoption, still maintained their loyalty to the homeland. The results of that loyalty may be seen today in tangible form, but the quality of it is changeless in the Icelandic character.

One result of that quality of mind and heart is "Betel" at Gimli. I know of no other ethnic group, who maintain in-

dependently their own home for the aged. Now the gospel is spreading, and Dakota and Vancouver have been touched by a living fire! The fresh air camp at Hnaua and the Sunrise camp at Husavick, are also examples of the faith of the Icelander.

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Before I close, may I try to evaluate some of the qualities our people possessed and passed on to this new land. We find so much to be proud of in their contribution to this country. There is a great deal of talk now of selected immigration, especially of British stock. But the contribution of our Scandinavian groups is not to be ignored; the incidence of crime is negligible and the use made of educational facilities is phenomenal. They have made the best farmers, and they are home-loving, book-loving folks. Let us cherish the heritage of honesty and forthrightness and steadfastness they left with us.

They sleep peacefully now, most of them, where formerly they toiled and achieved and then passed on the torch to other hands. So—

"Let not ambition mock their useful toil,  
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;  
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful  
smile

The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of  
power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er  
gave

Await alike th' inevitable hour:—  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.  
—From Gray's "Elegy".



## *The Outstretched Hand*

It has been suggested by Judge Lindal that I should give my opinion on what might be done to encourage and promote cultural relations between people of Icelandic extraction in Canada and the U. S., who have little or no knowledge of the Icelandic language and us here in Iceland. It is a great pleasure for me



**Friðrik Hallgrímsson**

to do so, particularly because, during my years of pastoral work in Canada, I endeavored to get the young people of my parish interested in Icelandic history and literature, as I was convinced that it would be of great educational value to them. Now, that I am here in Iceland, I feel that it is not only our duty to our people on the other side of the Atlantic to keep informed about their literary pursuits and other activities, but that it would also in several ways be to our own advantage to do so.

The first thing I would suggest is that

good English translations be made of outstanding Icelandic literature, ancient and modern, which would thus be made accessible to those who have not a sufficient knowledge of Icelandic. Such translations of some of our Sagas have been made and published in England. I would also recommend a very attractive and interesting book: *Norse Stories*, by Mabie, published by Dodd, Mead & Co., New York. The reading of such books might even arouse in some of the readers a desire to be able to read them in the original language.

Another thing which I consider to be of great importance is an exchange of students for post-graduate work. We have at present a Canadian student at the theological faculty of our University, and it is well known that a large number of our young people are studying at Canadian and American Universities. This should be encouraged as much as possible, not only for the benefit to the students themselves, but also because, on their return to their respective countries, they will promote mutual acquaintance and understanding.

The same object could also be achieved through visits by outstanding men in different walks of life, who by lectures and in other ways would spread knowledge of their country and people, and on returning home would become messengers of friendship and goodwill. During my years in Canada we were visited by several such men from this country, and I can truly say that their visits did much good. One of them brought with him seeds of Icelandic flowers, which he gave to his Canadian friends to plant in their gardens. He also by his talks and his personal charm planted in the hearts of those who came to know him many a seed of reverence and regard for the "old country". And I know also that in recent years visitors from this country have not only greatly appreciated the cordial

hospitality with which they were received in Canada and the U. S., but that they also, since their return, have taken a still greater interest than before in the affairs of our people in those countries.

Submitting these remarks for consideration and discussion, I wish The Ice-

landic Canadian great success in its disinterested and important work. May the young generation of Icelandic Canadians become worthy successors to the pioneers, whose memory will always be dear to the Icelandic people.

**Friðrik Hallgrímsson**

## *Tunglsgeisli*

Eftir Unni Benediktsdóttur

Ef að tunglsgeislinn  
litli, ljósi,  
hefði fjaðrir  
og flogið gæti  
á vængjum hvítum  
yfir vog og strönd,  
eg skyldi hann  
með ást mína senda.

Ef að tunglsgeislinn  
litli, ljósi,  
hefði mannamál,  
skyldi eg biðja' hann  
að bera mína  
ungu ástarkveðju.

Ef að tunglsgeislinn  
ljúfi, ljósi,  
hefði vanga og vör,  
skyldi eg biðja' hann  
í blundi kyssa  
hann, er eg heitast ann.

## *If the Moonbeam*

Translated by Skuli Johnson

If the moonbeam,  
Airy and bright,  
Feathers possessed  
And the power of flight;  
On his pinions of snow,  
I would ask him to go,  
O'er ocean and land  
At my love's command.

If the moonbeam,  
Tiny and bright,  
Power possessed  
That on words could alight:  
On his pinions of snow,  
I would ask him to go,  
Across the wide air  
My love-greeting to bear.

If the moonbeam,  
Gentle and bright,  
Features possessed  
That would charm with their sight:  
On his pinions of snow,  
I would ask him to go,  
And love's kiss impart  
On the lad of my heart.

## *Iceland---Atlantis on the Arctic Circle*

By CARL SCHAEFER

I had been sleeping on a pile of mail bags off and on for about eight and a half hours in the great cavernous belly of our Liberator. We were flying four to five thousand feet above a waste of monotonous grey cloud and there was nothing to see. The cold was paralysing, but it must have been a package of ice-box cookies in one of those bags some kind mother was sending to her son that dug into my ribs and finally got me on my feet. I crawled forward; Squadron Leader MacIntosh, our skipper said we would make landfall in fifteen minutes.

I just caught sight of the coast as we were coming in over the American base. Here was a red-brown waste of volcanic country, devoid of trees, stretching out to the north and east; beyond, Vatna Jökull, afterwards I learned the largest ice cap on the island, equal in size to Corsica. Reykjavik and our base sprawled out before us. We made a circuit of the airfield and set down at 15.40 hours, which was really 6.40 p.m., 18.40 hours, Greenwich Mean Time. We moved our clocks ahead three hours. Here I was to work on a new attachment.

Our kit was thrown into a lorry and the lot of us bumped over the crushed lava road to station headquarters. After the usual formalities of new arrivals, we collected our gear and looked for the squadron adjutant, a man always treated with great reverence, but not to be taken too seriously. I found Flight Lieutenant Merv. Hurst to be the best adjutant I had ever run into. He found me a nice Nissen hut with three characters firmly established; Butch, station traffic officer, a gunner who had done a tour of "ops"; Gal, equipment and messing officer, a good man to keep in with, and Cliff Saunders, radar officer and a wizard camera man. Here I bedded down.

We were comfortable with only four to a hut, storage space for equipment, a great oil-stove and toilet facilities, com-

plete with shower and even curtains on the tiny windows. Our section of the camp had been taken over from the Americans, they always did things up in great style.

Next morning, over at R.A.F. Intelligence, I was expected; had to show my authority and get passes to carry a camera and make studies. I found a friend! Squadron Leader Godfrey, senior intelligence officer, with whom I had worked in Northern Ireland. So I was lucky. He turned me over to our intelligence officer, Flight Lieutenant Jonas Jonasson of Edmonton, who was immediately interested in my job as official war artist. Joe was a second generation Icelandic-Canadian, with a great array of cousins still living in Reykjavik. He had friends everywhere and insisted I meet them all. I was more fortunate than I knew. It is an extremely difficult thing to be set down in an occupied country, especially such a remote one as this, and to try to find out about the people, how they live and what they think of us. Right now I must say I was never accorded anywhere a more generous and warm-hearted welcome, or received greater courtesy, kindness and hospitality.

When I was introduced as a Canadian painter, that must have turned the trick. Here the artist stands as one of the most respected individuals in a country of state medicine and high order of education.

All the arts are subsidized by the government; the artist is part of the living and creative environment. He does not stand apart. His work is shared by all in the country. Even a mediocre artist, no matter how bad his work, is encouraged and given praise. One feels a great awareness of the arts. For Einar Jonsson, Iceland's foremost sculptor, the government has built a fine museum, hous-

ing his work, where the artist has his studio and living quarters.

Most people in the urban centres speak English and at least one other language besides their own Icelandic, which is a direct descendant of Old Norse. The population is roughly one hundred and thirty thousand. The development of modern housing and architecture during the past twenty years in the new section of Reykjavík, the capital of the country, is amazing. Houses are ferro-concrete in construction, are beautifully furnished, comfortably heated at low cost by water piped down from the hot springs, reaching the houses at boiling point. On a visit, dinner consists of thin pancakes with whipped cream first, then ptarmigan or salmon and all manner of sea food and Danish style pastry; their national dessert is *skyr*, a junket-like dish made with sour and fresh cream and eaten with sugar, and then large quantities of strong coffee.

Soon after, my friend, Joe Jonasson, introduced me to the work of Johannes Kjarval, the real genius of the country and Iceland's foremost and greatest artist, a painter of abstractions, strange fantasies of the old sagas, great dynamic landscapes of the lava fields and volcanic country of the interior. The Icelandic has always been profoundly interested in the relationship between the seen and the unseen, the known and the unknown. Dreams and spiritual phenomena of all kinds have played a great part in his life through the centuries. It is all reflected in the art of the country.

I visited the house of Olafur Thordarson, cousin of Joe and nephew of Kjarval and had the opportunity of seeing many fine Kjarvals. Then there was the fine collection of Stefan Gunnarsson, whose hospitality I shared on several occasions. In a recent exhibition of Kjarval which closed shortly before I arrived, 240,000 kronur was paid for 37 paintings; that is an average price of over one thousand dollars a painting; 36,000 kronur, 6,000 dollars, was paid in admissions alone, all of which goes to the artist. I remem-

ber also Eggert Gudmundsson, a fine artist whose studio I visited on several occasions; and Thorvaldur Skulason, Jon Stefanson and Karen Thorarinsson, whose work I saw at an exhibition of twelve painters held during the week of the artists' congress. That was a special holiday. The Icelanders are great folks for holidays. Since their recent independence, their new flag, a red cross on a blue ground flies from a staff in front of every house and on top of every building. It presents a beautiful sight against such a grim background.

I was fortunate to meet Tomas Gudmundson, Iceland's most promising poet, and later Halldor Laxness, their leading novelist, who is tremendously interested in Canada. At present he is translating *Maria Chapdelaine* from the French into Icelandic. Their architects number among others August Pálsson, Gunnlaugur Halldorsson, Sigurdur Gudmundson and Erik Einarsson.

Now my job was to cover the Royal Canadian Air Force section of the airfield, its dispersement, station activities and operations. Working conditions during May and June were only fair; although we had practically twenty-four hours daylight, terrific gales carrying red lava dust were a particular bind.\* I've known the wind to swing 180 degrees in a few hours, then I'd have to shelter behind sand bags or in an old gun position. At times it was impossible to work, you were knocked off your feet and the temperature would change twenty-five degrees in no time at all, bringing rain or a great cold blast off the Greenland ice cap. Generally the weather was fine and moderately warm, very much like the United Kingdom, but when there's duff\* weather this region has probably the worst flying conditions anywhere. But there were compensations; the country on our coast was beautiful: spring flowers covered the deep tundra, the colour ranged from Naples yellow, whitish grey, grey red,

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\* Air Force term.



grey blue-green to rich umber and sienna and the Venetian red of the lava. Great boulders lay strewn about; our camp lay at the base of Howitzer Hill and from the bomb dumps you could see Skerja Fjord stretching out to sea and away off to the south-west, a great flat plain and beyond, the Brennistein Range, a string of volcanic mountains standing on the horizon. Then there was Hafnarfjörður on the west coast, a quaint fishing village just a short bus ride from our camp. We would explore the village and watch the trawlers coming in with great loads of halibut and cod. Fishing is Iceland's principal industry. They also raise sheep and their wool is of an exceptionally fine quality. All the boys on the station had sheep skins to ship back home to Canada.

Then too, there were the coffee houses in Reykjavík, where you seemed to drink strong coffee and eat all day long; the harbour packed with allied ships; the Polar Bear Cinema, free to the forces, showing the latest flicks. There were the Nýja Bíó and the Tjarna Bíó, fine movie houses in town showing the latest American films, then the British officers' club where you always managed to meet anyone you were looking for. Here I met Lieutenant Harrold Alsen, Norwegian skipper of H.M.S. Thetis, minesweeper, who entertained lavishly and gave me permission to make drawings of the harbour from his ship. He was most complimentary regarding my efforts and I settled for a group photograph with his second officer and myself with Alsen in the middle. Later he took me to the great celebration at the Hotel Borg on the occasion of the liberation of Norway.

Then there was the odd trip into the interior. Flight Lieutenant Hurst, our adjutant, arranged for a jeep. We packed plenty of rations and two extra "Jerry" cans of petrol and headed for Thingvellir. We passed along winding roads, farms with their old *bær* or farm house, a three gabled structure of stone and

sod, with herds of sheep and green-houses nearby, groups of riders, always trailing spare horses. The Icelandic horse, about the size of our pony, is a spirited animal with long mane and tail hanging to the ground.

Thingvellir is the site of their ancient parliament, more than one thousand years old, the oldest legislative body in the world. The great volcanic cliffs, broken by deep faults, stood on the edge of a long plain bounded by a long lake. Here were all manner of curious and fantastic constructions, the formation is flat lying basalt, columnar jointed, broken by great waterfalls. Farther on our road became a track, off to the east we could see great pyramids of volcanoes and close by old craters with boulders strewn everywhere. We passed Jossafoss with its hydro-electric power station and had lunch by the falls, admiring its beautiful construction and bas-relief sculpture, miles from any settlement. Then to Gullfoss. We compared it with Niagara and its phoney floodlights and agreed that Gullfoss was more beautiful. Here one travels by chart and does a proper navigation job. Lucky we had the station navigation leader with us. We changed places in our jeep as often as we could, travelling at ten to twelve miles an hour; after six or eight hours of this you are all in. When I got up in front I made rough drawings as we went along. We got to the Great Geysir, an area of steaming hot springs, pools of blue and red boiling mud. It was late and I painted a fast water colour in the weird midnight light; again over those torturous roads, the great waste looked even more desolate in the early morning light. Every two hours we would get out and run up and down among the boulders to loosen up. Then on again passing more extinct cones and low lying craters and winding in and out between the shadows of great towering peaks. It was the home of the trolls and a landscape of the moon.—Canadian Art.

# Canadian Citizenship

## *The Ceremony in Manitoba*

Ed. Note — The writer of this article is a member of the staff of the Provincial Secretary of Manitoba, Hon. Charles E. Greenlay, under whose auspices the Citizenship Ceremony in Manitoba was arranged.

On January tenth, 1947, twenty-eight residents of Manitoba marked the coming into force of the Canadian Citizenship Act by receiving from the Chief Justice of Manitoba certificates of Canadian citizenship. The ceremony was colorful, and the procedure dignified; but what lent the occasion its force was the fact that it had a profound personal meaning for each participant. Every one of them had tried the Canadian way of life and found it good; had chosen to give to Canada full loyalty.

Ten of the participants were being legally received into the community for the first time. They came from Switzerland, from Sweden, from Austria, from Russia, from Norway, from the Netherlands; they had lived and worked in Canada and were becoming at once British subjects and Canadian citizens. There was no mistaking their earnestness of purpose and appreciation of their new status; one man delighted the on-lookers by waving his certificate joyfully above his head as he returned to his seat; and he expressed the feeling of them all.

Next came fifteen people who had long been British subjects, living in Canada, but who now took advantage of the new law to reaffirm their faith in their adopted country. Some had risen to high places; others were proud to be respected private citizens; all had colorful stories to tell of opportunities grasped and community services rendered. It was particularly fitting that the Icelandic community be represented by Judge Walter J. Lindal, whose book "Canadian Citizenship and Our Wider Loyalties" reviewed the new act under

whose authority the whole ceremony was being held.

Last came three Canadian born citizens: Premier Stuart Garson, Mayor Garnet Coulter, Mr. John Bracken. All were demonstrating their allegiance to the principle of Canadian unity underlying the new status of Canadian.

Stressed by every speaker was the need to preserve the cultures of the old lands in the environment of the new. "Diversity in background and interest such as is represented here today adds to rather than detracts from the richness of the pattern that is Canada", said Premier Garson.

Since the January ceremonies in Winnipeg and in Ottawa brought the new Act more forcibly to their attention, many thoughtful Canadians have spoken and written of the effect of the new legislation. Nearly all recognize it as a timely symbol of the new position in world affairs Canada won during the war, and her important role in the international negotiations that have followed it. Others have expressed their apprehension that it is one more sign of the disintegration of the British Commonwealth. Still others feel that citizenship alone is not enough without some statement of the rights and duties of citizens implied by the new status.

However the historians and constitutionalists feel, the individual Canadian has accepted with satisfaction the new status.

Many Canadians who have long felt enslaved to a hyphen ("Polish-Canadian, German-Canadian, Scotch-Canadian") now feel the support of the community and of the law behind them when they call themselves citizens of

their country. In our beginnings, perhaps it was necessary to trace the elements that entered the melting pot; to know just what a rich brew we were stirring up as we joined cultural backgrounds. Now we are past that: we have learned that dropping a hyphen does not eliminate a heritage. The diverse colors and flavors of the Canadian peoples are too bright and clear to need labelling any longer; and the mixture has a unique flavor of its own, which needs a name.

Perhaps because of our new status, Canadians have been taking, lately, a

renewed interest in the conditions of life in this country; in freedom, in liberty, in opportunity to pursue happiness. As Mr. B. K. Sandwell pointed out in Winnipeg recently, "Our heritage of freedom is too much of a heritage, and not enough of something worked out by ourselves." Until now, we have simply accepted our way of living. Now, as Canadians, we can work out our own answers to the problems of social and political and economic organization, in the light not only of one or two heritages, but of them all.

Jean Edmonds

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## Book Review

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### GREAT ADVENTURES AND EXPLORATIONS

By Vilhjalmur Stefansson

The well-known arctic explorer and author, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, has now written a fascinating saga of the great explorers, published by Longman, Green & Co., Toronto.

Stefansson was born in 'New Iceland' near what is now the village of Arnes, Manitoba, and commenced his polar explorations in 1904 at the age of 25. He spent some 12 years in the Arctic regions of Canada including many of the islands north of the mainland, and has written over a dozen books on exploration, studies on ethnology, and books about the North for children. This latest book is a fascinating story of discovery from the earliest times, with passages from the records of the great explorers them-

selves. Dr. Stefansson then proceeds to apply his deep fund of knowledge and his keen practical sense to the interpretation of these records and succeeds in bringing to the reader an enchanting yet analytical study of the famous ocean navigations down through the ages. The first adventure recounted is the voyage, in the fourth century B. C., of a Greek named Pytheas, "To Britain and to the northern end of Scotland, thence to Iceland and beyond it for a distance of about one hundred miles". The book closes with the account of Amundsen's expedition to the South Pole in 1911.

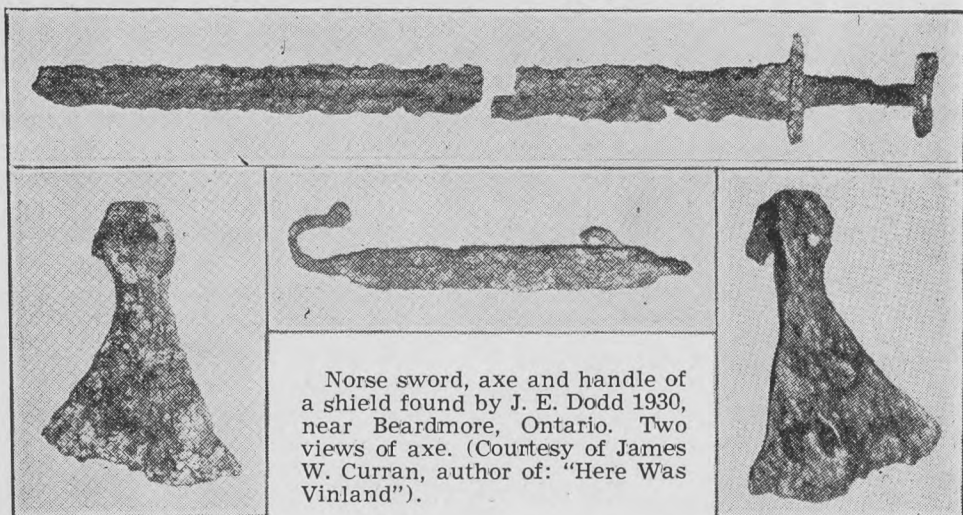
Mr. Stefansson has recently written a series of articles in the Winnipeg Tribune concerning the purpose of the latest polar expeditions, notably the newest Byrd expedition to the Antarctic; and also the importance of the Arctic, especially in the event of a third World War.

H. D.

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## *A Canadian Archaeological Treasure*

By MARION HENDERSON, Iroquois Falls, Ont.



After reading an account of "The Colonization of Greenland and the Discovery of America", in that excellent series of lectures, "Iceland's Thousand Years", my interest was aroused to study more fully this intriguing subject of 'the lost colony of Greenland'.

There are several books and articles that attempt to lift the veil which still shrouds in mystery the fate of the Greenlanders. A great deal has been written about the finding of the Kensington Stone and the discovery of the Beardmore Viking weapons.

Regardless of the fact that the authenticity of the Kensington stone is still a controversial matter, it is not difficult to imagine a party of Viking warriors making their way from Hudson's Bay and James Bay as far inland as Minnesota. There, presumably at the turning point in their journey, they left a marker, a Runic stone which was discovered at Kensington, Minnesota only fifty years ago.

The inscription on the Runic stone has been translated: "We are eight Goths and Twenty-two Norsemen on an exploration journey from Vineland over

the West. We had camp by two skerries one day's journey north of this stone. We were out and fished on day. After we came home we found ten of our men red with blood and dead. Ave Maria save us from evil. We have ten of our party by sea to look after our ships, fourteen day's journey from this island. Year 1362."

Again we see in our minds eye a group of bearded white warriors, now threading their way through the silent untrammelled forests and waterways of northwestern Ontario. Perhaps it is the same party, returning from the land of the Sioux, in Minnesota, their stern faces turned toward their patient longships left months ago in Hudson's Bay. We note the long swinging stride of powerful limbs, the easy noble bearing of proud heads, as the men file through the forest, making haste to reach their shipmates before ice blocks the Bay. There is silence on this march for all are thinking of the companion who was buried hastily on a portage of the Blackwater River, not far from the lake named Nipigon.

Mystery curls once again about the



retreating figures. Who were they? Did they all perish or did they reach the Bay again? Could we have recognized their leader as Paul Knutson, whom the King of Norway sent in 1354 to search for the Greenland colonists, or could it have been a band of the Greenlanders themselves?

The buried warrior-companion of the Viking party lay for centuries beneath three and a half feet of earth in our northern forests. A clump of beautiful, white birch covered his woodland resting place.

Then several years ago, a railroad worker of Port Arthur swung off a train at the tiny station of Beardmore, seven miles from Lake Nipigon, Ontario. He was James Edward Dodd who enjoyed a spare-time hobby of prospecting for gold. His curiosity had been aroused by an exposed, nearly vertical vein of quartz which disappeared into the earth under a clump of white birch trees. Deciding that the tough and tangled birch roots would resist hours of chopping, Mr. Dodd laid a generous charge of dynamite. It blew up the entire mass of trees, roots and earth. On a rock, thus exposed to view, lay a few bits of rusted iron. Mr. Dodd tossed them aside until his search of gold quartz was satisfied, then he casually stowed them in his haversack, believing them to be Indian relics.

When he reached home Mr. Dodd threw the pieces of iron into a box under the kitchen sink. They remained there until Mrs. Dodd lost patience and tidied her kitchen by throwing the pieces of iron on the ash pile. Mr. Dodd rescued

them a second time, storing them in his woodshed.

Years passed by. Occasionally he spoke of the unusual relics and displayed them.

Then one day an interested school teacher saw Mr. Dodd's curious find. He sketched the strange bits of iron and sent an accurate drawing to Mr. C. T. Curelly, who was then head of the Royal Museum of Archaeology, in Toronto. A museum staff member was sent to Beardmore, and two other scraps of iron were located. They were believed to be pieces of a shield boss, for they matched the workmanship of the small, iron shield grip, the oddly shaped axe and the broken sword which the museum now bought from Mr. Dodd.

Norwegian experts agreed that the articles of this set of weapons date from the tenth century; and it is unique that such a complete set has been found outside of the Scandinavian peninsula.

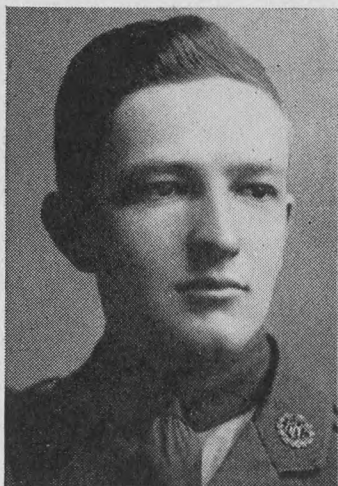
Last summer while in Toronto, I made a point of visiting the Museum to see the Viking exhibit. I was fortunate enough to encounter Mr. Spendlove who is in charge of these exhibits and information concerning them. Before I could put any questions, he volunteered the information that many authorities believe them to have been the arms of the Greenlanders, but that there is as yet no proof to bear out this theory.

But the "Beardmore Viking Weapons" constitute a prized exhibit in Ontario's Museum. They hold a place of honour in the centre of the great armoury room on the main floor of the building.

(Ed. Note: For the benefit of readers who are interested in pursuing this subject further, the following books are listed: *Westward From Vinland*, by Holand; *Greenland*, by Vilhjalmur Stefansson; *Minnesota Historical Society Collection*, Vol. XV. (Re: Kensington Stone).

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## Merit Rewarded



**SIR WILLIAM SAMUEL STEPHENSON,  
M.C., D.F.C., C.G.**

To the select group of Canadians of Icelandic descent who have attained international recognition for outstanding services to their country must be added another name, and it is with a sense of pride that we submit that of Sir William Samuel Stephenson, M.C., D.F.C., C.G.

He was born in Winnipeg on January 11, 1896. His foster-parents were Vigfús Stefánsson of Skógarströnd in Snæfellsnessýsla and Kristín Guðmundsdóttir Stefánsson from Kóngabrekka. His foster-brother, G. K. Stephenson, lives in Winnipeg.

He played a distinguished part in World War I. Having enlisted with the 101st Regiment, he transferred to the Canadian Engineers in 1915. He left for England early in the summer of 1916, and served with the Air Force on active service. As a result of shooting down 18 German planes, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Military Cross, and the Croix de Guerre. He was shot down, wounded, and captured by the enemy in July, 1918. On his return to Winnipeg he became the manager of the

Stephenson-Russell Company.

Having secured connections with the Cox-Cavendish Co., he returned to England, where he resided for a number of years. During this period he married Mary Simmons, the daughter of Mr. Simmons, the tobacco manufacturer of Springfield, Tenn.

During World War II, he was connected with the Intelligence Service, and directed British security co-ordination in the Western Hemisphere. In recognition of his outstanding services he was awarded the medal of Merit, the highest award of the American government.

The presentation, first to anyone not an American, was made by Maj.-Gen. William J. (Wild Bill) Donovan, wartime head of the Office of Strategic Services, who specially asked President Truman that he be designated to make the award.

The two intelligence heads worked closely during the war, and were used by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill in a number of highly-secret special operations. Sir William was commonly known as "Little Bill", while Gen. Donovan was called "Big Bill".

The citation accompanying the award, signed by President Truman, said:

"Sir William S. Stephenson, for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services to the United Nations.

"Sir William, as director of British security co-ordination in the Western Hemisphere throughout the years 1940-45, gave timely and invaluable aid to the American war effort in making available to the United States the extensive experience and resources of the British government in the fields of intelligence and special operations.

"At every step in the creation of these instrumentalities Sir William contributed assistance and counsel of great value

both to the government of the United States and to the entire Allied cause.

"In a duty of great responsibility he worked tirelessly and effectively to advance the efficiency and competence of American organizations which provided for the American government and its armed forces the same strategic services furnished to the British government by British organizations of similar nature."

As part of his work, which the president's citation recognized, Sir William's organization oversaw protection of strategic materials produced in the Western Hemisphere and the protection of shipping, with the result that not one effective act of sabotage was committed during World War II, as compared with several that occurred during World War I.

A. V.

## Notes of Interest Far and Near

The name of Mrs. Dora Lewis, New York, head of the Department of Home Economics, at Hunters College appears in Who Is Who 1946-47. She is likely the only woman of Icelandic nationality whose name appears in the above mentioned book. Mrs. Lewis is the daughter of Helga Sumarliðason, and her husband the late Sumarlidi Sumarlidason of Seattle, Wash.

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Among those visiting Toronto for Childrens' Book Week was the authoress Mrs. Evelyn Stefansson, she is an arctic expert in her own right, and writes books about it although she has never been there, but she admits that she gets all her knowledge from her husband, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, the famous Arctic explorer.

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Mr. Gisli Borgfjord, general representative Canadian Congress of Labor, has been appointed Director of Organization for Manitoba. Mr. Borgfjord will be in charge of all organization work in behalf of the Congress as well as regional representative with authority to deal with matters pertaining to the Congress.

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Peace Tower, is a new publication that has recently appeared on the market. The editor and publisher is Major Nor-

ton Anderson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Th. Anderson formerly of Selkirk, Man. Major Anderson has had considerable experience in newspaper work, together with his ability as a writer, the future of this publication looks very bright. The Peace Tower is published at Ottawa, Ont.

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The Associated Commercial Travellers Amateur Contest for the Mobile Tuberculosis Unit was sponsored by the Gimli Board of Trade and took place in the Gimli theatre, Wed., Feb. 19, 1947.

This contest brought in a total of \$1,200. There were 25 entries from the whole district, 11 from Gimli, 6 from Riverton, the others from Camp Morton and Matlock.

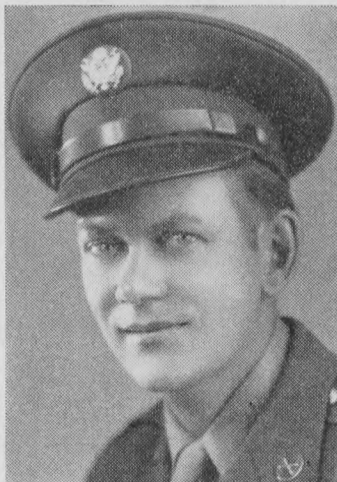
The 10 who secured the highest number of votes that evening took part in the broadcast over station CJOB. The three prize winners were: 1st prize, Nick Yureychuk, \$15.00, 900 votes; 2nd prize, Lorna Stefanson, Gimli, \$10.00, 626 votes; 3rd prize, Gladys Sigurdson, Riverton, \$5.00, 555 votes. These contestants received their awards at the Gimli Board of Trade meeting March 12, at the Gimli hotel.

A young girl, Fern Hallson of Riverton, read a poem by Guttormur Guttormsson, "Góða nótt". Although not one of the prize winners, Fern did exceedingly well.

# OUR WAR EFFORT



**Cadet-Nurse Sigrun Grimson**



**Cpl. Arni Grimson**

## IN MEMORIAM

**CADET-NURSE SIGRUN GRIMSON**—Born July 5, 1922 at Mozart, Sask. Graduated from Mountain, N. D., High School and Grafton Deaconess Hospital Training School for Nurses (Cadet Corps). Passed away Dec. 14, 1944.

**CPL. ARNI GRIMSON**—Born June 14, 1919, at Mountain, N. D. Joined the U. S. Army July 10, 1942. Trained at Fort Sill, Okla. Served overseas 27 months in Hawaii, New Guinea, and the Philippine Islands. Discharged Oct. 1, 1945.

**DAUGHTER AND SON OF MR. H. B. & ANNA (BJORNSEN) GRIMSON,  
MOUNTAIN, N. D.**

## CAPT. LYNN GUDMUNDUR GRIMSON

Born at Langdon, N. D., May 28, 1912. Joined the U. S. Army (Active Duty), Jan. 6, 1942. Assigned to Infantry School May 1, 1942 as instructor and administrative officer. Later was Glider Rifle Company Commander in 13th Airborne Div. Went overseas Mar. 1944. Assigned to V Corps, 1st U. S. Army June 1944 as corps historian. He wrote the history of operations of V Corps through campaigns of Normandy, Northern France, Germany and Ardennes. Was also on Corps General Courts-Martial and prosecutor in Military courts. Assigned to 69th Inf. Div. Feb. 1945 as Asst. Div. Judge Advocate through campaigns of Rhineland and Central Germany. Wears 5 battle stars on ETO ribbon and American Defence ribbon. Awarded Bronze Star for meritorious achievement by 69th Div., the citation reading in part:

"His ability, initiative and untiring devotion to duty reflect the highest credit upon Capt. Grimson and the armed forces of the United States."

**SON OF JUDGE & MRS. GUDMUNDUR GRIMSON, RUGBY, N. D.**



**Capt. Lynn G. Grimson**





**Flt.-Lieut. H. S. W. Mercer**



**Cpl. Richard A. J. Mercer**

**FLT.-LIEUT. HARALD S. W. MERCER**—Born at Theodore, Sask., Nov. 4, 1922. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. Aug. 1942. Trained at Regina, and Yorkton, Sask., and Rockcliffe, Ont. Received his wings Oct. 1943. Served with the Thunderbird Squadron as bomber pilot. Discharged March 1946.

**CPL. RICHARD A. J. MERCER**—Born at Theodore, Sask., July 15, 1921. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. as wireless electric mechanic Aug. 1942. Trained at Saskatoon, Sask., Montreal, P. Q., Rivers, Man., and Port Hardy, B. C. Discharged Oct. 1945.

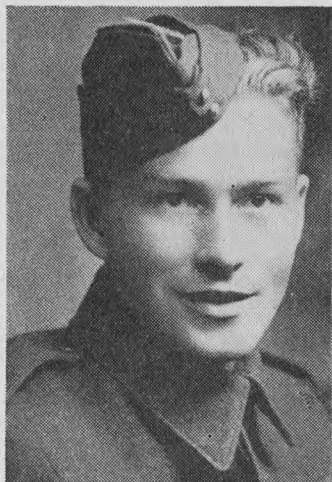
**SONS OF MR. R. W. AND MRS. SALBORG (SOLVASON) MERCER,  
THEODORE, SASK.**



**JONAS MAGNUS STEPHANSON**—Born at Piney, Man., Feb. 10, 1921. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. July 7, 1941. Trained as aero engine mechanic at St. Thomas, Ont. Posted to No. 8 repair depot at Winnipeg. Discharged Aug. 1945. Son of Mr. & Mrs. B. Stephanson, Piney, Man.



**LIEUT. CARL EDWIN ANDERSON**—Born at Oakview, Man., Feb. 6, 1921. Enlisted in R.C.N.V.R. spring of 1943. Served 2½ years, part of which time was overseas. Son of Mr. & Mrs. Guðmundur Anderson, Vancouver, B. C., formerly of Winnipeg, Man.



Cfn. Victor Gislason



Lieut. Oscar S. Gislason

**CFN. VICTOR GISLASON**—Born at Leslie, Sask., April 1, 1920. Enlisted Feb. 1942 and went overseas Aug. 1942. Served in Sicily, Italy and Western Europe. Returned Oct. 1945.

**LIEUT. OSCAR S. GISLASON**—Born at Leslie, Sask., July 9, 1918. Joined the army July 1944. Trained at Barriefield and Brockville. Has been stationed at Peterborough and Barriefield.

**SONS OF MR. & MRS. O. GISLASON, LESLIE, SASK.**



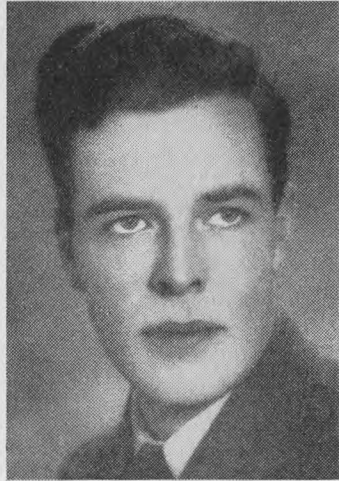
**MARGARET S. SIGMAR**—Born at Wynyard, Sask., Aug. 4, 1924. Entered nurses' training school at Ancher Hospital, St. Paul, Minn., in fall of 1943 as cadet nurse. Graduated as registered nurse fall of 1946. At present with Red Cross at St. Paul, Minn. Daughter of Rev. Haraldur and Anne Margrethe Sigmar, Vancouver, B. C.



**M/SGT. MAJOR LEON HARALDUR ZEUTHEN**—Born at Marshall, Minn., Aug. 10, 1910. Enlisted in U. S. Army Feb. 6, 1942. Served 3½ years, 27 months of which in Reykjavik, Iceland. Discharged Sept. 12, 1945. Son of Mr. F. C. and Mrs. Margaret (Jónasson) Zeuthen, of Minneapolis, Minn.



Cpl. Ethel Norman



Cpl. Philip John Norman

**CPL. ETHEL NORMAN**—Born at Piney, Man., Feb. 28, 1923. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. May 26, 1943. Took basic training at Rockcliffe, Ont. Served as stenographer at Toronto, Halifax, Scoudac, Moncton and Ottawa. Discharged June, 1946.

**CPL. PHILIP JOHN NORMAN**—Born at Piney, Man., Apr. 20, 1919. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. July 5, 1941. Took basic training at Brandon, Man. Was a security guard. Posted to Trenton, Dartmouth, Vancouver, Tofino and Boundary Bay. Disch. Sep. 5, 1945.

**SON & DAUGHTER OF MR. & MRS. KRISTINN NORMAN, PINEY, MAN.**

**ABLE SEAMAN ALBERT O. JOHNSON**—

Born at Tantallon, Sask., Oct. 8, 1925. Joined R.C.N.V.R. June 18, 1944. Served aboard H.M.C.S. Tecumseh in Calgary, Alta.; took a torpedoman's course at H.M.C.S. Stadacona, Halifax. Served aboard H.M.C.S. Chaudiere and Sault Ste. Marie. Son of John Kristjan and Kristbjörg A. Johnson, Tantallon, Sask.



**F.O. FRÍÐRIK ELÍASSON**—Born at Winnipeg, Man., Nov. 11, 1923. Joined the R.C.A.F. May 1942. Trained as air observer at Saskatoon, Edmonton, Paulson and Malton. Posted overseas Aug. 1943. Served with R.A.F. 13 months. Returned to Canada Oct. 1945. Released Nov. 1945. Son of Mr. & Mrs. Jens Eliasson, Mozart, Sask.



Lieut. F. A. Josephson



Lieut. R. M. Josephson

**LIEUT. FRANK ALLEN JOSEPHSON**—Born Sept. 18, 1921 at Minneota, Minn. Enlisted in Army Air Corps Sept. 1942. Went overseas as 1st Pilot on B-24 Heavy Bomber July 17, 1944. Completed 36 missions overseas. Returned April 1945. Discharged Oct. 10, 1945.

**LIEUT. ROBERT MYRON JOSEPHSON**—Born Aug. 3, 1923 in Minneota, Minn. Enlisted in Army Air Corps Dec. 1942. Went overseas as 1st Pilot on B-26 Medium Bomber Nov. 15, 1944. Completed 36 missions over Germany.

**SONS OF MR. & MRS. S. FRANK JOSEPHSON, MINNEOTA, MINN.**



**STEFAN ALFRED STEFANSON**—Born at Yarbo, Sask., June 12, 1918. Joined the U.S.A.T. May 1944. Served on west coast 6 mos., went overseas Nov. 1944. Served in South Pacific 11 mos. Returned Sep. 1945. Released Oct. 1945. Son of Mr. & Mrs. John Stefanson, Blaine, Wash.



**BURNEY ALLEN JOHNSON**—Born at Gimli, Man., Sept. 14, 1923. Enlisted in R.C.N.V.R. May 19, 1942. Served at sea aboard H.M.C.S. Prince Robert. Discharged March 8, 1945. Son of the late Mrs. S. P. Johnson, Gimli, Man.





**Pte. Aurora Sigridur Stefanson**



**Tpr. Haldor Numi Stefanson**

**PTE. AURORA SIGRIDUR STEFANSON**—Born at Winnipegosis, Man., Nov. 12, 1924. Joined the C.W.A.C. May 12, 1942. Took her basic training at Kitchener, Ont. Later transferred to N.D.H.Q., Ottawa, Ont. Discharged Dec. 1945.

**TPR. HALDOR NUMI STEFANSON**—Born at Winnipegosis, Man., March 28, 1918. Joined the Canadian Army March 12, 1942. Embarked overseas Aug. 1942. Served in England, Holland, Belgium and Germany. Arrived home Jan. 18, 1946.

**SON & DAUGHTER OF MR. & MRS. SIGURJON STEFANSON, WINNIPEGOSIS, MAN.**



**T4 S. J. Einarsson**



**Pte. H. F. Einarsson**

**T4 SÆMUNDUR J. EINARSSON**—Born at Calder, Sask., Sept. 2, 1905. Inducted into 95th Reconnaissance Troop of the U. S. Army July 9, 1942. Embarked overseas Aug. 6, 1944. Served in Northern France and Rhineland. Was awarded the E.A. M.E. Campaign Medal with 2 Bronze Stars and the Good Conduct Medal. Returned to U. S. June 13, 1945. Discharged Sept. 2, 1945.

**PTE. HALLDOR FRANKLIN EINARSSON**—Born at Calder, Sask., 1910. Enlisted in the 16-22 Saskatchewan Horse A.F., July 1940. He served in Canada. Discharged March 7, 1941.

**SONS OF JOHANNES AND THE LATE MRS. EINARSSON, CALDER, SASK.**



Lieut. (j.g.) A. F. Oddstad Jr.



1st Lieut. P. E. O. Farkas, R.N.

**LIEUT. (j.g.) ANDRES FJELDSTED ODDSTAD JR.**—Born at Rivers Inlet, B. C., June 24, 1918. Joined the U. S. Navy Apr. 1943. While training at Camp Perry, Va., he volunteered for service with the Underwater Demolition Unit. They took part in the assault of Attu, Kiska, Kwajaleen, Eniwetok, Guam, Saipan and other islands in the Pacific. He was sent back to U. S. for officers training. Promoted to Lieut. (j.g.) and sent to Okinawa. Awarded Presidential citation, Eniwetok, Bronze Star Medal, Guam, Presidential Unit Citation, Saipan and seven battle stars. Is now discharged.

**1st LIEUT. PEARL EMILY ODDSTAD FARKAS, R.N.**—Born July 26, 1916 at Rivers Inlet, B. C. Entered the U. S. Army Nurses Corps Sept. 1943. Stationed at Camp Callan Hospital, San Diego, Calif., Los Angeles Port of Embarkation Hospital, Torrance, Calif., Birmingham General Hospital, Van Nuys, Calif.

**SON & DAUGHTER OF DR. & MRS. A. F. ODDSTAD, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.**

#### L/CPL. THORSTEINN LINDAL THOMASSON

★

Born at Brown, Man. Enlisted in the Canadian Army July, 1942. Trained at Winnipeg, Debert and Aldershot, N. S. Embarked overseas Sept. 1943. Served with the South Saskatchewan Regiment in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. Was wounded twice. Repatriated home with the Q.O.C.H. Discharged Jan. 17, 1946.

Son of Mrs. Thomasson and the late Arni Thomasson, Brown, Man.



★

L/Cpl. T. L. Thomasson



**PTE. JOHN BALDUR ISFELD**—Born Oct. 14, 1922 at Gimli, Man. Enlisted in the Infantry May 12, 1943. Later transferred to R.C.O.C. Served in Canada. Discharged Mar. 20, 1946.



**Rfn. Morris Alexander Isfeld**

#### IN MEMORIAM

**RFN. MORRIS ALEXANDER ISFELD**—Born May 12, 1921 at Gimli, Man. Enlisted in the Winnipeg Rifles Jan. 25, 1943. Trained at Camp Debert, N. S., and St. John, N. B. Embarked overseas Aug. 1944. Served with the P.P.C.L.I. and Royal Winnipeg Rifles in Italy, Belgium, Holland and Germany. Was accidentally killed in Germany.

**SONS OF OLAFUR P. & HELGA I. (ARNASON) ISFELD, WINNIPEG BEACH, MAN.**

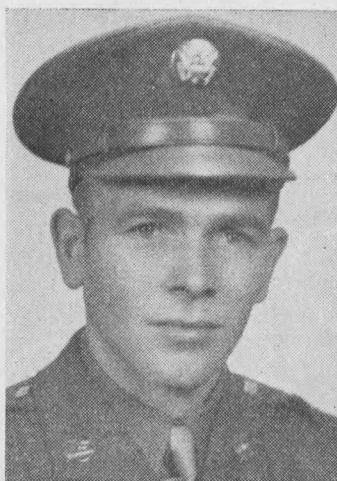
### In Memoriam



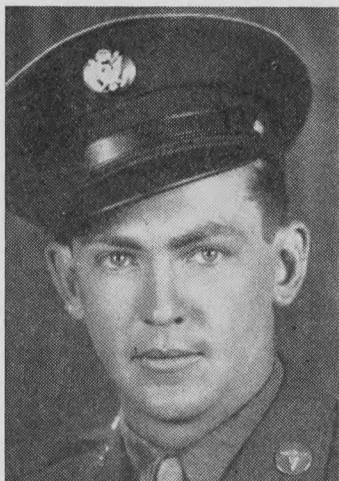
**JÓN B. EINARSSON**



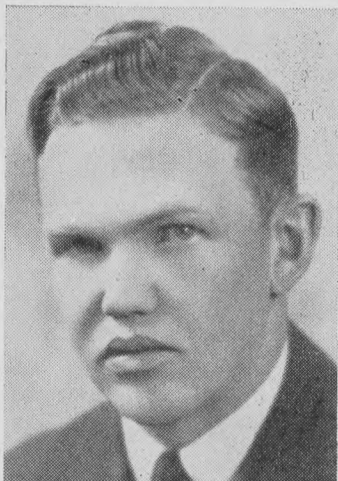
Born in Tálknafjörður, Iceland. Served in the U. S. Army from March 4, 1942 until Feb. 1944, on a Mine Planter. Held rating of Corporal at termination of service. Lost at sea when fishing trawler "Medford" was struck by a troop transport in Oct. 1935. Age 35. Parents are Einar Jónsson and Ingibjörg Christiansdóttir of Arlington, Mass.



**Jón B. Einarsson**



Sgt. Jón Herman Olafson



2nd. Lieut. B. T. Olafson

**SGT. JÓN HERMANN OLAFSON**—Born at Winnipeg, Man., Nov. 4, 1916. Entered U. S. Medical Corps Sept. 1942. Served overseas in Southern Germany. Discharged Nov. 1945.

#### IN MEMORIAM

**2nd. LIEUT. BRANDUR THEODORE OLAFSON**—Born at Gardar, N. D. June 20, 1918. Took military training under R.O.T.C. Commissioned 1940. He was completing a five-year course in research at the time of his death. His research on extraction of wheat germ oil was becoming more astounding as time went on. The day after his death he was to have had an interview with the DuPont Co., of Iowa, a long awaited opportunity. He was killed Dec. 20, 1940 in a mid-air collision of two training planes.

**SONS OF J. K. AND KIRSTIN OLAFSON, GARDAR, N. D.**

### In Memoriam



**P.O. HINRIK GUTTORMSON**



Born at Poplar Park, Man., Jan. 18, 1925. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. Oct. 1943. Trained at Edmonton, Winnipeg, Valleyfield and Mont Joli. Graduated at Mont Joli May, 1944. Embarked for overseas July 1944. Was reported missing believed killed on his 6th operational tour over Chemitz, Germany, March 6, 1945. Presumed dead Oct. 1945.

Son of Mr. & Mrs. Einar Guttormson, Poplar Park, Man.



P.O. Hinrik Guttormson





L/S. Carl Sigurdson



Pte. Sigurd Paul Sigurdson

**L/S. CARL SIGURDSON**—Born Sept. 17, 1922 at Keewatin, Ont. Joined R.C.N.V.R. April 30, 1941. Served on H.M.C.S. Morden on Atlantic Convoy from Aug. 1941 to April 1944. Then aboard H.M.C.S. Stadacona and Avalon till March 1945. Was on Pacific duty aboard H.M.C.S. Ontario from May 1945 until Nov. 1945. Discharged February 5, 1946.

**PTE. SIGURD PAUL SIGURDSON**—Born at Keewatin, Ont., April 30, 1918. Enlisted July 29, 1940 in the 19th Field Reg't R.C.A. Transferred to R.C.E.M.E. and served as craftsman 3½ years. Joined Infantry Aug. 1944. Saw service in Holland, Belgium and Germany. Was wounded March 1945 in the battle of the Maas, Holland. Overseas 4 years. Discharged November 1945.

**SONS OF SIGURDUR AND GUDBJORG (PAULSON) SIGURDSON, KEEWATIN, ONT.**

## TO OUR READERS

★

We have room, in our Summer issue, for a number of photographs for Our War Effort Department. We are anxious to have a complete record of those, of Icelandic descent, who served in the armed forces of Canada and the United States.

Information required: Full name and rank, full names of parents or guardians, date and place of birth, date of enlistment and discharge, place or places of service, medals and citations. Kindly send the photographs and information to:

Miss Mattie Halldorson,  
558 Arlington St.                      Winnipeg, Man.

Anyone wishing cuts of photographs that have appeared in the Icelandic Canadian Magazine may purchase same for \$1.00 plus postage.

## *They Shall Have Music*

By MRS. PAUL E. HALLDORSON, Burleigh County, N. D.

(Ed. note: Mrs. Halldorson here writes about an interesting aspect of life among the early pioneers of North Dakota. She is the daughter of Jacob Peter Arason, and his wife Solveig Fredericksdóttir, who settled at Mountain, N. D. Their seven children, who all played a prominent part in the musical activities related in this article, are: Gudrun, Fredrick Elert, Sigurdur Ari, Margret Johanna, Theodora Sigrun, Lawrence and Henrietta Lovisa Margret. Two children who died young also had born the names of Sigurdur Ari and Henrietta Lovisa).

In the year 1887, transportation was not what it is today. Mother thought it was just a miracle that they landed safely in America after three weeks on the rough ocean in such a small ship. She was a young woman then and had her four little children with her. Three who clung to her skirt and one whom she carried in her arms—a little infant girl just three weeks old.

Mother was a good sailor and went for a walk on the deck every day, with her children, while poor father never ventured on deck, as he was desperately sea-sick all the way. The interpreter told me many years later this amusing incident: When mother promenaded the deck with her three young ones clutching her skirt, and the infant in her arms, she smiled and received smiles in return—but she was handicapped as she knew only one word in English, and that word was "yes". One passenger would look at the infant and say, "Is it a boy?" Mother replied, "Yes". Another passenger would ask her, "Is it a girl?" Mother replying "Yes". After a few days of this, I guess the passengers gave up asking about the infant's sex.

The interpreter told me this story too. It was the custom of the stewards to make the rounds on the ship. One steward asked mother if she needed anything. Mother looked over to the bed where her husband slept, and then glanced lovingly over her little brood and replied, "I have everything."

Their worldly goods were few—one big chest about the size of two ordinary trunks which contained their beloved

books and clothes. They also had the inevitable bag of bed clothes (all eider-down feather quilts and pillows) that most emigrants from Iceland carried with them.

These feather quilts were lifesavers here in America, as my parents came straight to the North Dakota prairies, to a little village named "Mountain". The North Dakota winters were cold and, as the family of children grew to nine, there was need for plenty of good warm bed-clothes.

My father was a saddle maker and a shoe-maker in the old country. He had learned the trade and had decided to follow it in America. He found he had to broaden into harness making and repairing shoes and did that with great success.

Everybody owned horses in the early days. There were work horses, driving horses, and riding horses. I remember many a time when either farmers or business men would bring their horses and my father would outfit them with beautiful sets of harnesses and nets, with fancy trimmings. There was one team of coal black horses, all shiny. They were owned by the undertaker. This team was hitched to a black hearse—my father put a beautiful set of harness on them, and black net with tassels and fringe that almost touched the ground. There were silver ball trimmings on the hames, and silver ornaments on the bridles.

Mother decided that above all things she must have music in her home. After many years of struggle, she was able to

buy an organ. My oldest sister Gudrun was able to take a few piano lessons locally from a talented young man named S. K. Hall. She in turn showed us younger ones how to read notes and play. After some time, mother decided we must have a phonograph and get good recordings so that we could recognize and learn the classics and cultivate a liking for that kind of music.

Even if my father's business was good, there were seven children to feed and clothe, and oh, how we grew out of our clothes and wore out our shoes. In spite of adversity, mother never wavered from the idea of educating the children and above all in music—of which she never had enough. In this she had my father's full co-operation. I remember my parents, after much debating and borrowing some money, decided to send my oldest sister, Gudrun, to the Chicago Musical College. It's a long time ago—Ziegfield was president of this college then. She changed her name to Gertrude, as no one could pronounce Gudrun. So on her diploma, it's Gertrude Arason, much to mother's dissatisfaction. It was understood that she would teach all of us younger ones to read and play music. This she did very well.

Every summer during the holidays, and also after she graduated, she taught the piano. She maintained a class of piano students at Mountain and at the surrounding towns of Gardar, Hallson and Hensel. I took lessons from her for at least twelve years. All my sisters and brothers did too.

Some of us thought we could, by this time, have band instruments. We had a session with mother and this was no sooner said than done. We children got odd jobs and saved until we could buy at least second-hand instruments. Fred, my oldest brother, became our first band leader; that is, the first one that I remember. We had a fine band for many years. When Fred moved away, my younger brother Sigurd became the band leader—he played the cornet. That was the way in the Arason family—there

was always a younger one to take over when the older ones left.

Then for the first time girls were allowed to play in the band. I immediately got myself a tenor saxophone, my chum Martha Sigurdson played the clarinet, Octavia Leifur the clarinet, and Bertha Johnson the cornet. What a time we girls had. We were in demand at all the picnics. We often had band practice at home and this seemed to please mother; in fact, by now, she was beaming all the time. She never complained about the noise we made or the disharmony, but always said something encouraging to each player. The band played at the Walhalla Chatauqua, the Hamilton fair, and we were considered really good by now.

Mother was really, all by herself, a civic music association. She promoted outside artists to come to our little village and give concerts. She knew personally a Mr. and Mrs. S. K. Hall of Winnipeg, Man. Mrs. Hall was a beautiful soprano and Mr. Hall a pianist. She usually housed and gave meals to these artists when they stopped at Mountain. Our house was very small but we gladly crowded together, and any inconvenience we had was worth it many times over. We were the only ones for a long time that owned a piano. There was nothing to do but to lend our piano and have it moved to the town hall for these concerts. We also lent it for local programs. In this way, every one in the community could enjoy Mr. and Mrs. S. K. Hall and other artists that visited our little village. They gave concerts winter after winter.

The financial part never bothered mother. She said she couldn't add any way, but she wasn't afraid, and usually everything came out fine and everyone was satisfied.

Another artist was Daniel Aakhus of Grand Forks, N. D., a violinist—he gave several concerts for us during the long winters. My sister was his accompanist.

My sister Gudrun organized a girls'

glee club, and we gave concerts every year. Once we had our own programs printed, and were really in style. We had a Part I and intermission and Part II. This concert was given March 8, 1913. We gave some very fine classic numbers on that program. I have it before me, but it's too long to copy.

The location of the little town of Mountain favored its becoming the musical centre for the neighborhood, which included the towns of Gardar, Hallson, Akra and Svold, whose inhabitants were also enthusiastic about good music. Rehearsals were usually held in the church at Mountain. Little is known about these endeavors outside the community itself. Yet in this "little old garden away from the world", a mere pin-point on the map, the Icelandic Americans have for more than forty years kept up varied musical activities, which have been a source of pleasure and recreation to young and old alike.

The choruses, of course, varied in size from time to time, but maintained a fair size at all times. They had at various times been under the able leadership of the late Rev. H. B. Thorgrimson of Grand Forks. He was pastor at Mountain and the other little towns previously mentioned. Also my sister Gudrun, now Mrs. J. G. Johnson of Winnipeg, and more recently, R. H. Ragnar who has recently returned from the armed forces, were fine conductors. Tani Bjornson, now of Seattle, Wash., a fine baritone soloist, helped direct, and Th. Thorleifson of Gardar, N. D. My niece, Kathryn Arason, now Mrs. G. Bjornson, Seattle, Wash., was an able accompanist. Mrs. H. B. Sigmar, and her family, the Rev. N. S.

Thorlakson, added greatly to the chorus, both as soloists and otherwise.

The first band of singers, came to practice bumping over freshly broken roads in spring-wagons, buggies or what have you. Today the daughters, sons, grand-daughters and grandsons of these same pioneers come to practice in nice shiny cars over fine highways—but still singing the same songs' "Bí, bí og blaka, Sofðu unga ástin mín, Sverrir konungur, Pilgrim's Progress, Ólafur Tryggvason", and the other well loved Icelandic folk songs and classics. Many of the young farmers and farm boys, after working all day in their fields, rehearse until midnight for their annual concerts in the spring or early summer.

Down through the years from the first chorus, clad in homespun, to the choir members of today, in their fine clothes, these singers are upholding the tradition of our pioneer parents who broke the first turf in this wilderness and built their first log cabins. And as they sing today, they are remembarnig with reverence the loving work of those who rest beneath the sod so close to the old Lutheran church of Mountain.

The first week in May is National Music Week, and to me it seems very fittingly to commemorate my mother's birthday which falls on the 4th of May. For the most sacred place of memory in my heart is reserved for her, who was such an inspiration to all of us—her children; to her who brought the love of culture and music from the old world to the Dakota prairie and nurtured it into bloom, to be shared by all; to her who always had music in her heart and a song on her lips—my Mother.

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## *Local News and Club Activities*

### **Report of the I. C. C.**

The Icelandic Canadian Club decided at the December meeting to change the annual meeting from January to June. This makes it easier for the incoming executive to start their duties with the opening activities in the fall. However the president, Carl A. Hallson gave at the annual concert of the club a very comprehensive report of the year's activities which showed that the work of the club has expanded rapidly during the last few years.

As it will be of interest to readers to note the highlights of these activities, a few excerpts from the president's report are given here:

During the year 7 executive meetings have been held, and 7 general meetings. These have been well attended with from 50 to 120 members and guests present. Since the opening of the fall season meetings have been held in conjunction with the lectures given at the Icelandic Canadian Evening School.

Three socials have also been held in the First Federated church parlors, where a variety of entertainment has been provided such as musical skits, quiz programs, films, vocal and instrumental music, and of course refreshments. At these socials the Club has been happy to play host to a large number of out of town students, of Icelandic extraction, who have come to consider the Club as a centre of their gatherings. Many of these have joined the club. New members this year number 20.

The Club has taken an active part in citizenship affairs, and supported various projects of other organizations:

1. A committee composed of the president, Judge W. J. Lindal, Mrs. H. F. Danielson and Paul Bardal has attended the meetings to discuss the Chair in Icelandic at the University of Manitoba.

2. A committee composed of Paul Bardal, Mrs. H. F. Danielson and Hannes J. Lindal has been functioning for the

purpose of discussing ways and means of establishing a fund for building a concert hall or some type of community centre for the use of Icelanders here.

3. The Club supported the tea and drive for funds held in Winnipeg in aid of the Save the Children Fund, which netted \$650. Since the Tea was held April 18, Mrs. Danielson, who represented the club on this project has received donations to the fund, from people of Icelandic descent outside of Winnipeg, totalling \$160. This sum has been sent to the Canadian Committee, Save the Children Fund, Toronto.

### **The Various Projects of the Club**

The Icelandic Canadian Magazine has been published for 4½ years. It is becoming increasingly popular. The magazine contains a variety of literature of a high standard, including valuable historical information pertaining to the Icelandic pioneers here and their descendants, as well as articles on the history and culture of Iceland. About 900 pictures of service men and women, students, and others in the news, have been published to date. About \$1,800 has been spent for cuts alone, the cost of which is borne entirely by the publication. It would of course be impossible to render such service to the public except for the fact that all those who work on this project give their time and talents free. Those serving on the Magazine committee are: Judge W. J. Lindal, Holmfridur Danielson, Gissur Eliasson, Axel Vopnfjord, Mattie Halldorson, Stefania Eydal, Grace (Reykdal) Thorsteinson, and Hjalmur F. Danielson.

### **The Icelandic Canadian Evening School**

Like the magazine, the work of the school is receiving enthusiastic tribute from the public. At the end of this season 30 lectures will have been given on Iceland and on Icelandic pioneers in this country. This year the lectures are given in the Free Press board room, no. 2,

and have been well attended. The teaching of the Icelandic language takes place in the Daniel McIntyre Collegiate. There are three classes. In the senior class the students read Icelandic literature in the original. At the end of the school year a concert is held, and the students read or recite Icelandic poetry, and a musical program is given.

The book "Iceland's Thousand Years", which contains the first 13 lectures is now in its second edition. During these 14 months since the book was published sales have amounted to \$1,680. The Icelandic Legation in Washington, in behalf of its government, bought 500 copies of the book, as being the best material available to distribute among those who are interested in Icelandic history and literature, and who often ask for material on these subjects. Copies of the book, the magazine and the Icelandic lessons used at the school have been sent on request to people in Australia, Sweden, and England as well as to various places on this continent. These special requests have come from people who wish to give a talk on Iceland publicly but have had no available material. There is no doubt that through these mediums, knowledge and understanding of Icelandic matters is being widened. Libraries and book stores in various parts of Canada and the U. S. have ordered the book. Mrs. H. F. Danielson is director of the school and has from the beginning been almost solely responsible for this work being done. Others on the committee are: Miss Lilja Guttormson, Capt. W. Kristjanson, Miss Vala Jonasson and Rev. V. J. Eylands; the last two named represent the Icelandic National League on the committee, as this is a joint project of the two organizations.

### The Scholarship Fund

Barely 2 months ago the Club established a Scholarship Fund out of which scholarships may be awarded to outstanding students of Icelandic extraction. The public showed its approval of

this timely venture by supporting the fund very generously; in fact so generously that the first scholarship has already been awarded. This was a Traveling Scholarship of \$1,200 to the brilliant young pianist, Miss Snjolaug Sigurdson, to enable her to continue her musical studies in New York. The club has as yet done nothing to publicize this project, but as the idea becomes generally known it will doubtless receive widespread support, as one of the major aims of the Icelandic communities everywhere is to promote cultural endeavors. The club is indebted to those who have supported the fund so generously and also to those non-members who volunteered to aid the committee in establishing it. Those serving on the scholarship committee are Judge W. J. Lindal, Holmfridur Danielson and Paul Bardal, treasurer, who will be happy to receive contributions sent to him at Ste. 4, Bardal Block, Winnipeg, Man.

### The Welcome Home Reception

for the service men and women of Icelandic descent which was reported last year was sponsored jointly by the Jon Sigurdson Chapter, I.O.D.E., and the Icelandic Canadian Club. The two organizations feel greatly indebted to those public spirited citizens who acted as patrons for this affair, and thus made it possible to welcome in a fitting and dignified manner our returned service personnel. Those who so ably represented the club in making the preparations for that fine banquet were: Dr. L. A. Sigurdson, Holmfridur Danielson and Judge W. J. Lindal.

In conclusion the president thanked the club members, the various committees, the secretary, Miss Lilja Guttormson, the treasurer, Miss Mattie Halldorson, the vice-president, Mrs. Ena Anderson, and the social convener, Miss Steinunn Bjarnason for their splendid cooperation during the year. He also expressed the appreciation of the club to the general public, the Icelandic weekly papers and Rev. V. J. Eylands for active

interest and participation in the club's work.

### Annual Convention

The 28th annual convention of the Icelandic National League was held in Winnipeg, Feb. 24, 25, and 26. In his opening address, the president, Rev. V. J. Eylands stressed the fact that the League must make a special effort to interest the younger people of the various Icelandic districts in Icelandic culture and language. Ways and means of accomplishing this were discussed at the convention, and a resolution was passed providing for a representative of the League who would visit the various chapters, confer with the teachers of the Saturday schools, and in general re-organize the work along these lines.

Mr. Valdimar Bjornson of Minneapolis who had been stationed in Iceland during the war, brought greetings to the convention from the Icelandic government. On Monday Mr. Bjornson was guest speaker at a luncheon of the Viking Club given at the Marlborough hotel. Mr. H. A. Brodahl was in charge of arrangements and Mr. O. S. Clefstad president of the club, presided.

The annual concert of the Icelandic Canadian Club was held Monday evening in the First Lutheran church. The president, Carl A. Hallson, was in the chair. Mr. Carl J. Freeman of Fargo, N. D., and formerly Captain in the U. S. Navy gave a talk, "Iceland in Wartime". His address was effectively illustrated with large colored slides, showing the magnificent Icelandic scenery to great advantage.

The Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Operatic Society, a chorus of 40 voices and soloists under the direction of Miss Lola Smith gave excerpts from the operetta, Mikado. Miss Sigrid Bardal was accompanist. Miss Alma Walberg gave violin solos, accompanied by Miss Miriam Dickert.

The capacity audience of over 600 showed its keen enjoyment of the delightful program. Following the concert

the social committee, under the convenership of Miss Steinunn Bjarnason entertained 150 guests at a reception in honor of the musical artists and Mr. and Mrs. Freeman.

Tuesday evening's concert, held at the same place and also well attended, was sponsored by "Frón", the Winnipeg chapter of the League. Mr. T. J. Oleson, the newly elected president, was in the chair. The guest speaker was Valdimar Bjornson. Other items on the program were: organ solo, Mr. H. J. Lupton; vocal solo, Elmer Nordal; Icelandic poem, P. S. Palsson; and two groups of songs by the Icelandic Male Voice Choir of Winnipeg, conducted by S. Sigurdson, with G. Erlendson at the piano.

The closing meeting of the convention was held Wednesday evening in the First Federated church, Rev. V. J. Eylands presiding. Dr. R. Beck gave an address, Mrs. Pearl Johnson gave vocal solos, and Miss Thora Asgeirson gave a group of piano numbers.

All officers were re-elected with the exception of J. Asgeirsson who wished to retire, as assistant secretary. J. J. Bildfell was elected in his place.

### Thordarson Library Sold

The library of the late Dr. C. H. Thordarson, of Chicago, has been bought by the University of Wisconsin for \$300,000. This library consisted of 11,000 valuable books, some of them being rare books on science; it included also a large number of fine Icelandic volumes. The Wisconsin University Quarterly reports that among single library units in the U. S. the Thordarson library contained the largest collection of books on science, in the English language.

C. H. Thordarson held a Master of Arts degree from the University of Wisconsin and the University of Iceland conferred on him an honorary degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

There has been a write-up about Dr. Thordarson in the Icelandic Canadian, March 1945 issue.



**Miss Snjolaug Sigurdson**

has been awarded a Travelling Scholarship of \$1,200 to enable her to continue her musical studies in New York. This is the first scholarship to be awarded from the Icelandic Canadian Scholarship Fund, recently established for the purpose of aiding outstanding students of Icelandic descent. From her earliest childhood Snjolaug showed a remarkable musical talent; she has won coveted scholarships, and is well known in Winnipeg as a concert pianist, accompanist and organist. She has many times been featured soloist over the CBC networks. She took a special course in advanced training under Stojowski at the New York Summer School and is at present studying with the eminent musician, Ernest Hutcheson, former president of the Juilliard Institute of Music.

Snjolaug is the daughter of the late Sigurjon Sigurdson and his wife, who was formerly Jona Vopni. The family is exceptionally musical; Sigurjon was a sensitive musician, played the violin, and in the early days, organized the first orchestra in Arborg, Manitoba, where they made their home from 1910

until they moved to Winnipeg in 1940. Mrs. Sigurdson resides at 605 Banning St., Winnipeg.

★



**Mrs. E. L. Johnson**

At the annual convention of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture held in Winnipeg in January, Mrs. E. L. Johnson of Arborg, represented Manitoba as director of the Manitoba Federation. She has been active in the work of Federation since its local branch was formed in Arborg 25 years ago, and is at present convener of the health committee of the Federation. Andrea Johnson came to Arborg from North Dakota in 1901, with her parents, Tryggvi and Holmfridur Ingjaldson, now both deceased, who, as pioneers in that district, were well known for their community activities.

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## LETTERS TO THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN MAGAZINE

... I think the Icelandic Canadian is the most constructive effort that is being carried on now to preserve Icelandic inheritance amongst the younger generation here. I hope your circulation will grow...

(Judge) G. Grimson, Rugby, N. D.

... I enjoy reading the magazine and think it becomes increasingly more interesting...

Sibba Axford, Cannon Falls, Minn.

... I was interested to read Holmfridur Danielson's beautiful poem "Christmas Memory", and to learn about the Icelandic custom of Christmas commencing at 6 o'clock, Dec. 24th. I enjoyed reading W. Kristjanson's article translated from the old diary; and was quite entranced with the handicraft write-up, by Sofia Wathne. Now if some one would only write about Icelandic music and publish some melodies for us, there would be one very eager reader in Iroquois Falls.

(Miss) Marion Henderson,  
Iroquois Falls, Ont.

... We (my husband, English born, and I) think the Icelandic Canadian is a splendid magazine, it has some very fine material within its covers, we enjoy it all.

(Mrs.) Salborg Mercer, Theodore, Sask.

... I want you to know that we all appreciate having your fine magazine in our library, and we wish to thank the Icelandic Canadian Club for sending it to us... Members of our staff too, are interested in the magazine and I, who am Canadian born, have found many things in the Icelandic Canadian that have helped me to appreciate the land that my parents called their own.

(Miss) Margaret Sveinson, Matron,  
Betel Old Folks Home, Gimli

... This is to thank you for the copies

of the Icelandic Canadian. The story "Pioneer Mother" touched me deeply.

(Miss) Pauline Snyder, Winnipeg, Man.

... I would like to express my appreciation for all English articles written about our ancestors or about Iceland. In that way we have something to pass on to our children. My grandson has become especially interested in books and pictures on Iceland... I hope you will publish the lectures on "The Icelandic Pioneers in This Country", either in book form or in the Icelandic Canadian, a magazine that is treasured by all.

Mrs. S. Brynjolfson, San Francisco, Cal.

... With personal regards to yourself and the others that are giving so much of their time and effort to bring before the public the history and culture of our beloved fatherland, I am most sincerely yours,

J. J. Erlendson, Hensel, N. D.

... Keep up the good work. It is a lovely magazine.

(Mrs.) Sigga Cook, Saskatoon, Sask.

... Thank you very much for "Iceland's Thousand Years", and the two issues of the Icelandic Canadian. Every one here was amazed that such a small country held such a romantic history.

(Miss) Freda Easy,  
New Westminster, B. C.

... Thank you for your courtesy in sending me "Iceland's Thousand Years" and the copies of the Icelandic Canadian. I used some of this material with much success and the members of our Travel Club profited by it...

Ruth Girard Hope, Personal Director,  
Amsterdam City Hospital,  
Amsterdam, N. Y.

(Ed. Note: These last comments came from two young ladies who are among the many that have asked for material on Icelandic history and culture, for the purpose of giving talks on these subjects to the public).

## NEW APPOINTMENTS

★

### Represents U. S. Law in Philippine Islands

States Attorney O. B. Benson has recently been appointed by the U. S. Evaluation and Selection Board for the position of quasi-judicial attorney for war crime activities connected with the past war. This type of position was first offered in Germany in connection with the famous Nurenberg war crime trials, and later in Japan in relation to the Pacific war atrocities.

Attorney Benson accepted the appointment for at least one year, and will be stationed at Manila, in the Philippine Islands.

Very rigid qualifications were required for this appointment. An outstanding legal education, the ability to speak forcibly and understandingly before large groups, and the ability to uphold the honor and competence of the American Bar before the eyes of the foreigners. These appointees are to serve under military leadership.

Among the duties Attorney Benson must assume are the responsibilities of serving as judge or prosecutor in the military government courts. He must prepare opinions and advice for his military superiors and will be required to review court cases as they arise.

Attorney Benson has been highly honored in his appointment to this position. He is one of the very select few who are chosen to represent the United States courts before the scrutiny of the foreign nations. Attorney Benson will share in the opportunity to foster peace in the world through the honesty and integrity of the military courts in dealing with war crime activities.

Attorney Benson has been re-elected to the office of States Attorney in Bottineau County and at present arrangements are being made to fill this office during his absence.



**Maria L. Green**

a Los Angeles attorney has taken an appointment in Washington, D. C., as Assistant Legal Director, Office of Real Property Disposal, War Assets Administration.

For the past few months Miss Green has filled a position with the same title in Los Angeles Regional Office of WAA, and prior to that time was with the War Department, Real Estate Division of the U. S. Engineers for nearly four years. At the time of her transfer to the WAA in September of this year, Miss Green was chief of the Leasing and Claims Branch as well as Legal Advisor to the Los Angeles office.

Maria is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Cecil Green of Hollywood, her mother was formerly Elaine Fjelsted of Winnipeg.

★

Mr. S. B. Helgason was recently appointed professor in Plant Science at the University of Manitoba. He is a graduate of the University of Manitoba. Professor Helgason is the son of Stefan Helgason, and the late Margret Helgason of Elfros, Sask. At the death of his mother he went to live with his aunt, Kristín Helgason at Baldur, Man.

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